

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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SOE-02 DODE-00 DOE-15 SS-15 SP-02 CEQ-01 PM-05  
SAS-02 PA-01 ICA-11 AID-05 HA-05 TRSE-00 /162 W  
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R 301154Z AUG 78  
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8889  
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
AMEMBASSY DACCA  
AMEMBASSY KABUL  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
AMCONSUL KARACHI  
AMCONSUL LAHORE  
USLO PEKING  
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 ISLAMABAD 8524

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS  
TAGS: MNUC PEPR PARM PK US FR  
SUBJ: PRESS AND GOP REACTIONS TO REPROCESSING DEAL CANCELLATION  
SURPRISINGLY MILD

REF: (A) ISLAMABAD 8280 (B) ISLAMABAD 8318 (C) STATE 214621  
(D) STATE 215058 (E) STATE 215950

1. SUMMARY: PAKISTANI REACTION TO THE FRENCH DECISION TO CANCEL  
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ITS REPROCESSING PLANT CONTRACT WITH PAKISTAN -- AND TO THE  
ALLEGED AMERICAN PRESSURES INSTRUMENTAL IN EFFECTING THE FRENCH  
ACTION -- HAVE BEEN SURPRISINGLY MILD SO FAR. OFFICIAL REACTION  
TO THE (NEVER FULLY ACKNOWLEDGED) CANCELLATION HAS BEEN LIMITED  
TO REMARKS BY CMLA GENERAL ZIA DELIVERED TO A PRESS CONFERENCE ON  
AUGUST 23 (REF B) AND SOME PORTIONS OF A LONG SPEECH ON THE  
SUBJECT OF NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION DELIVERED BY FOREIGN AFFAIRS

ADVISOR AGHA SHAHI ON AUGUST 29.

THE EMBASSY HAS LEARNED THAT AN OFFICIAL GOP POSITION STATEMENT IS IN PREPARATION AT THIS TIME BUT WE HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE IT WILL NECESSARILY TAKE A MORE ABRASIVE OR COMBATIVE LINE THAN WE HAVE SO FAR SEEN.

PRIVATE SECTOR COMMENT REPRESENTED BY INDEPENDENT PRESS ARTICLES AND EDITORIAL COMMENT HAS RANGED FROM VIRULENT CONDEMNATION OF US AND FRENCH MEDDLING TO BLASE DISINTEREST IN THE WHOLE MATTER. THE OFFICIALLY-INSPIRED (IF NOT CONTROLLED) PRESS HAS TENDED TO EMPHASIZE THE SORROWFUL ASPECTS OF PAKISTAN'S ABANDONMENT BY HER FORMER GREAT FRIEND (THE US) RATHER THAN ANY ANGRY DENUNCIATIONS OF OUR SUSPECTED ROLE IN THE MATTER. ALL SECTORS OF THE PRESS HAVE TENDED TO PORTRAY THE PAKISTANI NATION -- HAVING BEEN GRIEVOUSLY MISTREATED BY THE GREAT POWERS -- CARRYING ON NONETHELESS WITH NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT. NO OFFICIAL MENTION IS MADE, HOWEVER, OF ANY INTENTIONS TO PROCEED WITH ATTEMPTS TO OBTAIN A NUCLEAR REPROCESSING CAPACITY. END SUMMARY.

2. THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN WATCHING CLOSELY THE REACTION IN THE PAKISTANI PRESS AS WELL AS IN OFFICIAL CIRCLES TO THE FRENCH DECISION TO CANCEL THE REPROCESSING PLANT CONTRACT. SO FAR THE REACTIONS FROM ALL SECTORS -- PUBLIC AND PRIVATE -- HAVE BEEN SURPRISINGLY LOW-KEY. OFFICIAL GOP PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON THE CANCELLATION HAVE CONSISTED OF CMLA GENERAL ZIA'S PRESS CONFIDENTIAL

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CONFERENCE OF AUGUST 23 (REPORTED REF B) AND A SPEECH DELIVERED AUGUST 29 BY FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADVISOR AGHA SHAHI TO THE PAKISTAN ASSOCIATION OF WORLD FEDERALISTS. IN NEITHER OF THESE OFFICIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS IS THERE AN INDICATION THAT PAKISTAN INTENDS TO "GO IT ALONE" ON REPROCESSING OR TO OBTAIN THE TECHNOLOGY FROM OTHER EXTERNAL SOURCES.

3. THE CMLA'S STATEMENT. GENERAL ZIA, IN RESPONSE TO ONE QUESTION IN THE AUGUST 23 PRESS CONFERENCE CONCERNING POSSIBLE PRC REPROCESSING AID, SAID THAT PAKISTAN HAD CONTACTED NO OTHER EXTERNAL SOURCES TO INQUIRE ABOUT OBTAINING THE TECHNOLOGY. IN ANSWER TO ANOTHER DIRECT QUESTION AS TO WHETHER PAKISTAN WOULD GIVE UP THE IDEA OF EVENTUALLY GETTING REPROCESSING, GENERAL ZIA OBFUSCATED THE ISSUE IN A LONG ANSWER WHICH INCLUDED THE STATEMENT: "PAKISTAN HAS MADE A RESOLVE...THAT IT WILL NOT STAY BEHIND IN THE FIELD OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY. PAKISTAN HAS ALSO GIVEN ASSURANCE ON THE INTERNATIONAL PLANE THAT WE ARE AGAINST NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION -- MISMANAGEMENT OF NUCLEAR ENERGY."

--ALTHOUGH WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO OBTAIN A VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT OF THE CMLA'S AUGUST 23 REMARKS (AND SUSPECT THE GOP HAS ORDERED NO SUCH TRANSCRIPTS BE DISTRIBUTED) OUR TRANSLATIONS OF PARTIAL

REPORTS INDICATE ZIA MENTIONED THREE TIMES PAKISTANI INTENTIONS TO PROCEED WITH NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT SPECIFIC MENTION OF REPROCESSING TECHNOLOGY.

--NEITHER WAS THERE IN THE AUGUST 23 PRESS CONFERENCE ANY DIRECT CONDEMNATION OF THE US FOR UNTOWARD PRESSURE ON FRANCE.

4. AGHA SHAHI'S SPEECH. THE ONLY OTHER OFFICIAL PRONOUNCEMENT WE HAVE NOTED IS THAT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADVISOR AGHA SHAHI ON AUGUST 29. SHAHI, SPEAKING AT KARACHI TO THE PAKISTAN ASSOCIATION OF WORLD FEDERALISTS, DELIVERED A WIDE-RANGING POLICY STATEMENT ON NON-PROLIFERATION, WEAPONS TRANSFERS, AND NUCLEAR-FREE ZONES. HE MENTIONED WITH SOME HEAT THE PERFDY OF "SOME OF THE NUCLEAR SUPPLIER STATES AND THEIR ALLIES (WHO) PREVENT THE TRANSFER OF CONFIDENTIAL

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NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES TO THIRD WORLD NATIONS..." AGHA SHAHI ASSURED HIS AUDIENCE OF PAKISTAN'S COMMITMENT TO NON-PROLIFERATION PRINCIPLES AND COMPLETE SUBSCRIPTION TO INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS. HE THEN REGRETTED SOME MAJOR POWERS' BLIND SPOTS IN NOT APPLYING THEIR NON-PROLIFERATION

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POLICIES EVENLY TO ALL COUNTRIES (CITING SOUTH AFRICA AND ISRAEL).

--AGHA SHAHI SPENT THE LION'S SHARE OF HIS SPEECH OUTLINING PAKISTAN'S EFFORTS IN ALL AREAS OF NON-PROLIFERATION: INDIAN OCEAN NUCLEAR FREE AREA; SPONSORSHIP OF UN PROPOSALS FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACEFUL NUCLEAR ENERGY SHARING; AND EFFORTS FOR LIMITATIONS ON CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS. THE ADVISOR USED DAMNING STATISTICS (EG: MORE SPENT ON ONE WING OF FIGHTER AIRCRAFT THAN CONFIDENTIAL

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WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION SPENT IN TEN YEARS ON FIGHTING MALARIA) TO ARGUE AGAINST THE WORLD'S SPIRALING ARMS RACE AND PROMISED PAKISTAN INTENDS TO SPEND ITS LIMITED RESOURCES FOR MORE CONSTRUCTIVE PURPOSES.

5. OFFICIAL STATEMENT FORTHCOMING. THE EMBASSY HAS LEARNED FROM RELIABLE SOURCES THAT THE GOP IS PRESENTLY PREPARING AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT ON THE REPROCESSING ISSUE. OUR INFORMATION IS THAT ADVISOR AGHA SHAHI, FONSEC SHAHNAWAZ AND ADDITIONAL SECRETARY NIAZ NAIK ALL DEMURRED WHEN ASKED TO DRAFT THE STATEMENT. THE AUTHORSHIP NOW WILL FALL TO MUNIR AKRAM, DIRECTOR OF UN AFFAIRS IN THE MFA. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION AS TO WHEN WE MAY EXPECT THE RELEASE OF THE OFFICIAL STATEMENT.

6. SEMI-OFFICIAL REACTION. PRESS REACTION TO THE REPROCESSING PLANT CANCELLATION CAN BE DIVIDED INTO TWO GENERAL CATEGORIES. THE MORE IMPORTANT OF THE TWO IS THE "SEMI-OFFICIAL" VIEW AS ARTICULATED BY THE GOP CONTROLLED NATIONAL PRESS TRUST (NPT) PAPERS. LED BY THE DAILY "PAKISTAN TIMES," THE NPT POSITION HAS REMAINED MODERATE, AVOIDING ANY SHRILL OUTCRY. IN AN AUGUST 26 EDITORIAL THE "TIMES" CLEARS UP ANY LINGERING DOUBT AS TO THE TRUE NATURE OF PRESIDENT GISCARD'S LETTER TO ZIA IN STATING "...DIPLOMATIC NICETIES AND AMBIGUITIES APART, IT (THE LETTER) IN EFFECT MEANS THAT PARIS HAS GONE BACK ON ITS EARLIER COMMITMENT." THE SAME EDITORIAL LAMENTS FRENCH "KNUCKLING UNDER (TO) AMERICAN PRESSURE."

--THE "TIMES" AND OTHER TRUST PAPERS HAVE CONSPICUOUSLY AVOIDED

HARSH CRITICISM OF FRANCE OR THE US AND HAVE MADE NO MENTION OF RETALIATORY ACTIONS ON THE PART OF THE GOP.

7. INDEPENDENT PRESS REACTION. THE INDEPENDENT PRESS IN PAKISTAN REPRESENTS A BROAD RANGE OF POLITICAL, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC  
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INTERESTS BUT HAS BEEN FAIRLY UNANIMOUS IN CONDEMNING THE FRENCH CANCELLATION. THE BITTERNESS AND ZEAL WITH WHICH THEY CRITICIZE, HOWEVER, VARIES GREATLY. MOST OF THE MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD PUBLICATIONS HAVE EXHIBITED A "HO-HUM" ATTITUDE TO THE CANCELLATION -- OFTEN INTIMATING THAT THEY "KNEW IT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN."

--THE FAR RIGHT AND GENERALLY TRADITIONALIST MUSLIM INTEREST PUBLICATIONS TENDED TO UNDERLINE THE ANTI-ISLAM, PRO-ISRAEL ASPECT OF THE CANCELLATION. EVEN THIS CRY, HOWEVER, WAS LESS THAN SHRILL.

--THE MOST AGGRESSIVE CRITICS OF THE DECISION -- AND OF US/FRENCH COLLUSION -- WERE THE LEFT-WING PAPERS, MANY OF WHICH ARE STAUNCH SUPPORTERS OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF BHUTTO'S PEOPLES PARTY (PPP) RESOLVED AUGUST 27 TO CALL ON THE CMLA TO EXPOSE ALL THE DETAILS OF THE REPROCESSING CONTRACT. THE RESOLUTION CALLS ON THE MLA TO PUBLISH THE DOCUMENTS RELATING TO BHUTTO'S DISCUSSIONS AS WELL AS GENERAL ZIA'S DEALINGS WITH AMERICAN SECRETARIES OF STATE AND AMBASSADORS REGARDING THE PLANT. THIS RESOLUTION HAS RECEIVED MODERATE ATTENTION FROM THE PRESS BEING MOST WIDELY TOUTED IN THE PRO-PPP PAPERS.

8. COMMENT: WE NEVER EXPECTED MOBS FORMING AT THE GATES OF THE EMBASSY COMPOUND IN RESPONSE TO SUSPECTED US COLLUSION IN THE FRENCH CANCELLATION -- BUT NEITHER DID WE EXPECT QUITE THE ANTI-CLIMAX WE HAVE SEEN. THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR HAVE REACTED IN KNEE-JERK FASHION AND THE GOP HAS MADE ONLY PASSING REFERENCE TO THE INCIDENT IN OFFICIAL STATEMENTS. THE US AND FRANCE (AS WELL AS GENERAL ZIA) HAVE BEEN MILDLY TAKEN TO TASK BY CRITICS OF THE PRESENT MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION BUT NONE OF US HAS TAKEN A PUNISHING BEATING ON THIS ISSUE. IN PART, THE GENERAL MILDNESS OF THE REACTION REFLECTS THE ANTI-CLIMACTIC NATURE OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT, AS WELL AS THE FACT THAT SOME OF THE VENOM WAS DRAWN OFF IN THE EARLIER ROUND OF REACTION TO THE  
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SUSPENSION OF AMERICAN AID. WE WERE ALSO LUCKY THAT ZIA BROKE THE

NEWS WHILE HE WAS ANNOUNCING HIS NEW CABINET.

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R 301154Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8891

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

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OUR PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH GOP OFFICIALS INDICATE THE MLA IS MOVING SLOWLY AND CAUTIOUSLY ON A RESPONSE TO THE FRENCH CANCELLATION. HAVING LET THE INITIAL HEAT PASS WITH VIRTUALLY NO REACTION, THE MLA CAN NOW MAKE ITS RESPONSE MEASURED AND THOUGHTFUL. THE GOP LEADERSHIP KNOWS WELL THE INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF WHATEVER THEY SAY AND CAN BE EXPECTED TO FRAME ANY OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT WITH FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES.

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THE INFORMATION THAT THE OFFICIAL POSITION PAPER IS BEING DRAFTED BY A MIDDLE-LEVEL OFFICIAL -- WELL KNOWN TO US AS A COMPETENT AND POLISHED DIPLOMAT -- ALSO BODES WELL FOR A MODERATE RESPONSE. IT SEEMS TO US UNLIKELY IN THE EXTREME THAT IF GENERAL ZIA WISHED TO MAKE A FLAMING DENUNCIATION OF FRENCH VENALITY AND US MEDDLING HE WOULD HAVE WAITED THIS LONG. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE DO NOT EXPECT THE OFFICIAL STATEMENT TO BE A TOTAL AND DEFINITIVE RENUNCIATION OF REPROCESSING AS AN EVENTUAL GOAL IN PAKISTAN'S AMBITIOUS NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT PLANS. THE REPROCESSING ISSUE, AND THE ROLE OF THE USG IN IT, WILL LONG BE A POLITICAL FOOTBALL IN PAKISTAN AND WILL CERTAINLY COLOR THE WAY PAKISTANI GOVERNMENTS VIEW THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE US. BUT IT COULD HAVE BEEN A LOT WORSE.  
HUMMEL

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## Message Attributes

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**To:** STATE  
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